Tourism, Culture and Recreation
July 18, 2008

Down to the Dirt to be Featured at Toronto Film Festival

The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism Culture and Recreation, today congratulated all involved with the film production of *Down to the Dirt*, which was recently named to the list of films to be featured at the Toronto International Film Festival, to be held September 4-14, 2008.

"This project is a remarkable example of how the department and its funded agencies have partnered with talented artists, right from the beginning, to support a creative process that has led to national and international recognition," said Minister Jackman. "My sincere congratulations are extended to producer Anna Petras, director Justin Simms, and of course to Joel Hynes, who both starred in the film and wrote the novel on which it was based."

Mr. Hynes first received support to develop the novel *Down to the Dirt* through the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (NLAC) in 2001. The film has subsequently been supported, by various means, through the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation (NLFDC), the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-operative (NIFCO), the Film Producers Association of Newfoundland, along with program and marketing support through the Cultural Economic Development Program (CEDP) of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

"Provincial Government support provided to the local film industry has enabled success stories such as this to emerge," said Minister Jackman. "We remain committed to developing our local film industry, as is evident in the increased operational and program support provided since the 2006 implementation of our cultural strategy: *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador*."

Down to the Dirt film producer Anna Petras said the support provided by the Provincial Government has been instrumental in the film's success. "We are thrilled that *Down to the Dirt* has been invited to screen at the Toronto International Film Festival and hope that this is the beginning of a successful run for the film," said Ms. Petras. "We are proud that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador supported our efforts towards the development, production and marketing of the film. It has allowed us to put the best possible product forward to screen to the world."

Budget 2008 provides $1.75 million in film equity investment and $585,000 in operational funding to the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation – an increase of $35,000 over 2007. The department also provides $50,000 in operational funding to the Film Producers Association of Newfoundland to offset costs associated with its ongoing export marketing development strategy, and $50,000 to NIFCO to offset costs associated with delivering programming to emerging and established filmmakers. Operational funding for the industry organizations is provided through the Cultural Economic Development Program (CEDP), which also supports film projects and festivals – such as the recent Nickel Independent Film Festival and the St. John's International Women's Film Festival, to be held in October.

"We believe the film industry has great potential in this province – and the more we do, the more we develop a skilled group of professional people (from filmmakers to set designers, to costume designers, carpenters, and more) to sustain this industry into the future," said Minister Jackman.

Since 2003-04, local film production activity has averaged about $10 million annually. Cultural industries employ about 7,000 people throughout the province and generate about $400 million to the local economy each year.

- 30 -

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search | Home | Back to Government Contact Us TOP

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